DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

NOVEMBER 1941

DOCUMENTARY—THE CREATIVE INTERPRETATION OF REALITY

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Attack

LORD KEMSLEY'S full dress attack in his paper *The Daily Sketch* on the Films Division of the M.O.I. certainly had the merit of plain speaking. It was followed on the next day by a series of comments by Trade figures such as Michael Balcon and Leslie Howard who made various pleas for more co-ordination, better facilities and greater utilisation of voluntary sources of film finance. We are entirely in agreement with the general criticisms underlying the *Daily Sketch* campaign, but there is some danger in the underlying *policy* which lies behind. It is no solution to make a block switchover from Government finance to voluntary finance. Nor is it true to say that the makers of M.O.I. propaganda films are inexperienced or incompetent (unless that charge is to be laid at the door of practically the whole British Film Trade). The root of the trouble lies, as we have constantly pointed out, in the complete inertia of the War Cabinet as regards propaganda policy, with the resultant confusion of purpose in all propaganda departments of the M.O.I. Our leading article this month takes up this matter in some detail as affecting the whole trade. In the meantime Lord Kemsley may care to remember that the film *Our Russian Allies* results from the fact that the Government of the U.S.S.R. has been pursuing a film propaganda policy for over twenty years, whereas this country had no national propaganda machine worthy any consideration until the outbreak of the present war. Incidentally this excellent Soviet film in question consists largely of material shot and edited while the U.S.S.R. was at peace.

Nice, Kind Paramount

ONE OF THE most unsavoury of recent short films was from Paramount and dealt with America's "Bundles for Britain" campaign. A great deal of footage was devoted to the Paramount Company's own charitable contribution. A high executive of that organisation was starring in the production which was apparently designed to thank American film-makers for

their generous gifts of comforts to Britain's war victims. The film finished on a poor old man and woman in the East End of London who were encouraged by the camera man to mop and mow their thanks to the nice, kind, rich Americans. Fortunately, in the following week, Paramount British went some way towards retrieving the company's reputation for liberal comment with an excellent newsreel in which A. J. Cummins and Tom Wintringham called for the formation of a Western Front and were most inadequately answered by Major-General Fuller. These days we want less toadying and more guts and we hope we may continue to look to Paramount British to talk sense about the war.

Heard in Wardour Street

"IN VIEW of the difficulty of getting permits to film the R.A.F., the Film Industry should take over the Air Force on condition that it undertakes to give the Air Ministry sufficient facilities to carry on the war."

In the Soup

WHAT IS happening to the laboratories? Every day one hears complaints—rushes jammed in autovacs, spotted negatives, badly developed tracks, delays in deliveries of prints or opticals. Every week far too many of the M.O.I.'s five minute copies are under-printed and wishy-washy. It is not like the laboratories to slip up on processing, and there is clearly some basic difficulty. Are too many lab. workers being called up? Is an increased amount of work causing daily bottlenecks in key departments? Are key jobs being done by people with insufficient training and experience? Whatever the reasons for the inefficiencies, they must be put right quickly. The M.O.I. should investigate the matter, and see that the labs. get a proper chance to do their jobs properly. The labs. are the most vital link in the production chain. Any weakness here directly affects the whole use of film as a propaganda weapon. At all costs the labs. must get back to their pre-war efficiency.

A.C.T.

OWING TO the peculiar nature of its jobs and the uncertainties to which it is especially prone, the film trade is one in which the need for organised labour representation is especially important. And for the same reasons it is a trade in which the organisation of labour is especially difficult. The Association of Cine Technicians' half-yearly report, issued in November, gives a vivid picture of the success of a trade union which only a few years ago was small both in numbers and in strength. Today its membership numbers 1,563 and its influence in all matters concerned with the Trade is of recognised importance. The report deals with the various negotiations regarding wages, hours of work, and cost of living bonus which have been carried through during the last six months, and almost every case is an example of the value of collective action. It is a great pity however, that it has not yet been possible to obtain a standard agreement with the British Film Producers' Association to cover all studio work. For although, as the report points out, "industrial producers and studio owners continue, in the main, to observe A.C.T. rates and general working conditions" it would obviously be far more satisfactory to both sides if labour matters could be negotiated *en bloc*. As regards the question of man-power, George Elvin, A.C.T.'s secretary, represented the labour interest on the Ministry of Labour Panel set up to consider the question of the call-up of film technicians, and was to the forefront in pressing successfully for a reasonable number of technicians to be retained in the national interest. In this connection the necessity for maintaining efficient output and planned production is of great importance, and it is good to learn that "A.C.T. has decided to ask all sections of the employers to meet them to discuss this. Meanwhile it has appointed a subcommittee to examine all steps necessary to ensure the maximum possible production and efficiency to aid the war effort and to eliminate all inefficiency, waste and mismanagement". In general, A.C.T. is much to be congratulated on its vigorous activities, and on the increasing success of its efforts to improve the working conditions of technicians employed in one of the trickiest of occupations.

Departure Platform No. 2

THE Cinematograph Films Council was created to deal with problems arising from the Quota Act. It was quite unable to function, due to the size of its Committee—twenty-one members, each with a conflicting trade or public view point, who were never able to come to any decision. Their annual reports are a reflection of this inability and an attitude of compromise and negative thinking that has not helped the Film Industry.

The functions of the Cinematograph Films Council in days of war are more properly the job of the Government. Their responsibilities should be the responsibilities of the Ministry of Information. It is another organisation taking up people's time, using up paper and serving no useful purpose. It is high time that this moribund institution was disbanded.

Night Starvation?

RECENT RUSSIAN war posters and cartoons seen over here are a shameful reminder that our own war-campaign on the hoardings and in all other points of advertising space has been consistently stupid, shoddy, pointless and ill-designed. Can we achieve nothing better than stuff which seems to emanate from the befuddled minds of old advertising narks who still live in the dark ages of the fear-technique. Look at Firebomb (somebody's mother isn't using a stirrup pump yet) Fritz. The fatuous National Saving spreads are yet another example, and it's quite refreshing to turn even to the pedestrian commonsense of the Ministry of Food's "Food Facts". Is there no chance of getting all our national publicity under a man of vigour, originality and imagination? The Russian stuff, though often crudely done, is direct, active, and appeals immediately. We can and must get the same thing here, and the first thing to do is to find someone who at least knows that B.O. stands for two different things, and plumps for the right one.

WE ARE WAITING

IT IS a scandal that after two years of war the British Film Industry is neither fully nor efficiently employed as a weapon of propaganda.

The existing set-up as regards films is lamentable. The Film Trade as a whole is anxious to get behind the war effort. Internal dissension—an old prerogative of our highly individualistic industry—would disappear very quickly if a bold lead were taken in official quarters. **The Trade has many faults, but it is one hundred per cent behind the war effort, and many of the existing muddles are due to the lack of leadership in official quarters.**

So it is worth while making a short tour of our rather complicated industry in order to see what's wrong, why it's wrong, and how to put it right.

In all this we must regard the Ministry of Information, for better or worse, as the only central body to which we in the Trade can look for a lead.

What then is the Trade position in relation to the M.O.I.?

Feature Production

The feature film industry of this country feels itself to be under sentence of death. Whilst the Board of Trade—ignoring the wider issues of propaganda by feature film—concludes with American producers a generous agreement regarding their sterling balances in this country, the Ministry of Labour demands for the Armed Forces a crippling proportion of the studios' man-power. **Anxious to pull their weight in the war effort, producers voluntarily undertake the production of propaganda feature films but they receive only a minimum of official support.** The Ministry of Information, engrossed in the production of propaganda shorts, pays scant attention to the possibilities of long films as a propaganda medium. Meantime the cinemas are flooded with American features with a propaganda content which often is not related to immediate national needs or is positively harmful.

The feature film is always bound to be the backbone of the normal cinema programme. We can neither afford to ignore its potentialities as a propaganda medium, nor dare we allow our film propaganda policies to be decided in Hollywood.

The feature film producers look to the Ministry of Information for official support in retaining personnel and for official guidance and co-operation in their choice and treatment of subjects.

Shorts Production

The shorts industry is more closely related to official film production than any other section of the Trade (except possibly the laboratories).

Shorts and documentary units are engaged almost entirely in film work for the Films Division of the M.O.I. and for the Service Departments. In addition, a good deal of time and film stock is being wasted on British Council films which still unfortunately have an official status, and thus, heaven help us, come under the heading of "films in the national effort."

But in general the M.O.I. and the Services are the main instigators of short film production today.

There are, however, a number of sponsors still in the field, some making prestige films directly devoted to the national cause and some engaged on direct, or almost direct, advertising.

The M.O.I. must take a stronger line on sources of sponsorship. It must see to it that no short films are made which don't form part of a definite plan of war strategy and war tactics. This involves the removal of the British Council Films Committee. It also involves control of all sponsors.

Sponsors planning films must be invited to gear all their programme to the national needs. If they fail to do this they must be denied the use of shorts units and facilities. In particular the Films Division must put an immediate all-in ban on advertising films.

There must be a strict and if necessary brutal grading of units and personnel according to their competences. There must be an uncompromising official attitude towards continuous inefficiency on the part of any unit.

But relations with production units require strong reforms on the Films Division side as well.

It is not always the fault of units if production is slow. There is still far too much general inefficiency at the M.O.I. due partly to unnecessary fiddling and partly to bureaucratic control.

There is for instance the position of the Public Relations officers of Government Departments. It is with their collaboration that many M.O.I. films have to be made. Often enough there is disagreement between the Department concerned and the Films Division. The faults may lie on both sides. They certainly cannot all be laid at the door of the Public Relations officers, several of whom (but by no means all) have a lively and intelligent appreciation of the use of films for propaganda.

It is up to the Films Division to create a simpler and more elastic system of collaboration. The present committee of P.R.O.'s which is supposed to meet regularly to discuss policy is obviously unsuccessful.

In any case, the shorts makers must work to one control only. As their concern is the interpretation of a propaganda line, the control must be at, or appointed by the M.O.I.

There is an increasing call on library material. All material held by the M.O.I., whether produced here, or in the Dominions, or by the Germans, should be quickly available. The M.O.I.'s library is at present in a state of complete chaos, as any short-maker can vouch for. It must be cleaned up right away.

Production can be further speeded up by less fiddling about with films at cutting copy stage. This particularly applies to

short-term films where punch rather than polish is wanted.

There must be absolute retention of existing personnel under the new arrangement regarding postponement from military service. Moreover, the M.O.I. should see that direct arrangements are made for the training and retention of new personnel. Most units are still understaffed, and understaffing contributes to time-lags in productions.

Official films—other than "ad hoc" efforts for special short-term purposes—must be more and more conceived as series, each series with its own generic title, style and form.

There must be more urgency in subject and in methods of treatment. In the present crisis journalistic punch, terse and imaginative cutting, and a strong informational background are what is needed.

Training films for the Services are bound to come under a somewhat different category. It would be absurd to deny Service Departments autonomy in their own specialised field.

A number of documentary units are being used for the production of such films, particularly for the War Office. And as regards Army Training Films there is considerable doubt as to the competence of the Department which is commissioning them. Methods of contracting, methods of treatment, and the attitude towards film -makers are all being questioned.

Recently, Service Departments have adopted a new practice. They have set up film units to do both propaganda and instructional films. The Army Film Unit has been in existence for some time; the Naval Unit is a more recent establishment; the R.A.F. has a unit in process of formation. It would have been expected that the Services would have turned to people with experience, both in propaganda and instruction, to staff these Units. Unfortunately, they have been controlled and staffed by studio technicians.

While the development of a studio is undoubtedly necessary for each of these Units, it is doubtful whether the studio mind can adjust itself to the making of public relations films or instructional films.

It is clear that the M.O.I. should have control of the staffing of the units, for they are in the best position to judge the man-power available and where it should come from.

Is the War Office making sufficient use of expert knowledge in the field of education by film? Is the distinction seen between the subject matter of training films and the manner in which the subject can best be treated in film form? On both these points there is considerable doubt.

If training films are to be successful it is vitally important that treatment, projection conditions, and indeed the relation of each film to the general educational scheme should be carefully worked out.

The Films Division of the M.O.I. ought to provide expert advice to the War Office on these matters. Otherwise the whole scheme of training films is likely to turn out as a big waste of public moneys.

Newsreels

These are dealt with more fully in the following article.

Distribution and Exhibition

In its relations with the renters the Films Division has shown lack of understanding and also ignorance of the machinery of commercial film distribution. Trade appointments at the M.O.I. have seldom had the confidence of the Trade, and on at least one occasion the Films Division has bungled a simple problem of distribution contracts.

The Films Division is probably too contented with the free distribution of the five-minute films to bother about getting a wider distribution of one-reelers or two-reelers in the commercial cinemas.

Is it enough to be content with the handful of special films such as *Merchant Seamen* and *Target for Tonight?* Why doesn't the Films Division make its peace with the renting concerns and negotiate suitable contracts for a series of theatrical one to two-reelers?

The overseas distribution of the Ministry is also in question.

The only news one has is that sensational films such as *London Can Take It* and *Target for Tonight* are distributed abroad but there is no evidence that the Ministry is proving successful in securing adequate overseas distribution.

We should be pumping films as hard as we can into every neutral and allied country. But what is the record?

There is the glaring example of Turkey and the Near East subjected to a barrage of active German film propaganda, and no news of any suitable British films reaching these countries.

There are a great many men in Wardour Street with years of experience of distribution in these territories and yet their experience is not called upon.

It is high time that a full report should be made of what we have achieved in overseas film distribution.

The exhibitors are worried by labour problems and by regulations regarding opening and closing times. The M.O.I. doesn't seem to be showing as much interest as it should.

Has the M.O.I. made it its business to get the problem of operators (projectionists) properly settled? It should be **a matter of prime concern to the Films Division if the cinemas find it difficult to keep up efficient service, and the Division should be in a strong enough position to intervene directly with the Ministry of Labour.**

Has the M.O.I. been in sufficiently close touch with the Home Office on the question of curfews and Sunday opening? Here again the M.O.I. should demand the right to advise and assist on these questions, which may in some areas be vital factors in civilian or service morale.

Both renters and exhibitors are affected by the quota regulations. Here again the Ministry of Information should be far more active. It should not be left solely to the Board of Trade or its mummified Films Council to decide on the number of British films to be shown in the cinemas. That decision, in time of war, must be finally with the Ministry of Information.

Summing Up

Even from the briefest survey it is obvious that the Government is neglecting the strategic value of the British Film Industry as a propaganda and morale weapon.

There is chaos where there should be organisation, and misunderstanding where there should be collaboration.

The film industry can and must be efficiently used. None of us in the Trade will object to revolutionary measures affecting production, distribution and exhibition if those measures produce maximum value of our work to the national effort. As an industry, however, we need a violent incentive to unite us. So far from getting an incentive, we are not even getting sectional encouragement in the various branches of our trade.

Many sections of the Trade object at the moment to what is regarded as interference by Government Departments—especially the M.O.I. Such objections are justified by the lack of understanding of our problems by official departments. If the right people were dealing with them all decent film workers would co-operate to the full.

But a strong M.O.I. depends on a strong national propaganda policy. The Film Industry needs that policy to be expressed. The Film Industry as a whole demands to be strictly geared to the strategy of the war, to be treated as a part of (not an appendage to) the whole strategic plan.

Such a conception is simple once you conceive of (a) Decision by the War Cabinet, (b) Instruction to the Ministry of Information, and (c) Interpretation by strong action in any or all propaganda media.

As one of those media the Film Trade demands a statement of policy and the construction of a more efficient machine to carry out that policy. It is still not too late.

THE NEWSREELS

The newsreels are the weakest factor in British film propaganda.

Between the five of them they share the task of providing the cinemas of the country with a week to week account of world-shaking events, yet less than half-a-dozen issues since the outbreak of war have been in any way memorable. The newsreels' method of war-time operation is such that the issues of the individual companies are scarcely distinguishable. They so regularly use the same officially pooled pictures that we no longer need so many as five separate reels. There is an unnecessary **multiplication of effort and waste of material in assembling, editing, commentating and distributing five versions of the same official story.**

In none of the reels does subject-matter and technical presentation measure up to the present situation. Quality is inadequate and distribution overseas (where the reels have a vital task in presenting the British case) is insufficient. To improve quality two reforms appear to be urgently necessary. Firstly, there must be a new attitude in the newsreel companies towards their war-time function. Secondly, a better selection of subject-matter must be made officially available. Both of these things can be achieved by the establishment of a more productive relationship between the Ministry of Information and the newsreel companies.

The public expects to see the progress of the war reported on the screen. It looks to the newsreels to fill this need. So far it has had to be content with an occasional isolated item of front-line reporting wedged in amongst reel after reel of official inspections, recruiting parades and speeches from the screen.

The public has compared this British coverage of the war with what the Germans are doing and knows full well that we are missing our opportunities. They know that even in the midst of the bitterest fighting it is possible for the camera to report the progress of the battle. The newsreel, no less than the newspaper, has a duty to fulfil in seeing that, by hook or by crook, the story of the war reaches the screen.

Changes in subject-matter are not a complete answer to the present inadequacy of the newsreels. The time has come to **consider drastic changes, not only in choice of subject but in method of presentation.** The scrappiness of the present day newsreel has gone far towards destroying its value as a medium of propaganda and public information. Nowadays it frequently happens that the greater part of the reel is composed of isolated groups of two or three scenes, each on a different subject. There has never been any reason why a newsreel story should not be as carefully shaped within its limits as any other piece of film narrative. Now that it is vitally important that every foot of film should make its point there is no place for slipshod technique. Every item must be **constructed with a clear sense in mind of the national purpose it is to serve.**

This same principle of careful shaping might well lead to the creation of a new kind of newsreel item to take its place beside the front-line story. The time has come to substitute for the stereotyped accounts of the doings of our royalty and leaders, the individual stories of ordinary men and women pulling their weight in the war effort. In their radio and press propaganda our Russian Allies are showing how powerful can be the drama of individual determination and initiative in the home and the factory as well as on the battlefield. **It is time for our own newsreels to discover the people.** No doubt certain liaisons with the conservative Central Office have put this question far into the background.

British news material is, for the most part, so bad that it commands little space in overseas newsreels. As the **Kine-Weekly** said on October 30th: "The ineffective treatment of British news in foreign countries is illustrated by the almost infinitesimal footage accorded by the American newsreels to the British war effort. This is due to weakness of material and its undramatic and pedestrian presentation."

The solution to the present problem of the British newsreel is not a difficult one. In the first place the Ministry of Information must provide complete facilities for the coverage of all important events or alternatively must see that satisfactory material is supplied to the newsreels by Service cameramen. In the second place the Ministry of Information must use its powers to ensure that war material is adequately presented. Thirdly, is it not time to consider reducing the number of newsreels from five to two or three?

GB SCREEN SERVICES LTD.

Producers and distributors of propaganda and publicity films

For the Ministry of Information:

"AIRWOMAN"
"CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAU"
"HOSPITAL NURSE"

For the National Savings Committee:

"SAM PEPYS JOINS THE NAVY"

DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTIONS:—
FRANCIS A. SEARLE

FILM HOUSE, WARDOUR ST., LONDON, W.I

Gerrard 9292

Telegrams: Gebescreen, Rath, London

NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Special Despatch. *Production:* Army Film Unit. M.O.I. 5 minutes.

Subject. One incident in the life of an Army motor-cycle despatch rider. He has twelve hours in which to take an urgent message from London H.Q. to an officer about to embark on a destroyer near Glasgow.

Treatment. The Army Film Unit has come in for a good deal of criticism over the past year, and it is all the more pleasant to find that this film has polish, humour, movement and an unforced human atmosphere. The despatch rider has a first-class film personality. The incidents on his journey north are shrewdly observed and very well scripted and shot. Particularly noteworthy is one scene in which he commandeers petrol from an Army lorry, and another in which he has a superb conversation with a Scottish shepherd while he is mending a very unwelcome puncture. Photography and cutting are on a high level throughout.

Propaganda value. It is difficult to see what made the Army Film Unit choose a subject which is in essence very trivial in face of the present war situation. With the dead piling up in millions on the Eastern Front, and with Cabinet Ministers prophesying invasion as hard as they can, this particular story lacks the punch and urgency which are badly needed in films relating to the war effort.

The question will perhaps also be asked: Is there no more expeditious means of sending urgent messages over a distance of some 400 miles than by an all-out motor-bike rush (with authorisation to break the speed limit?). On the positive side, however, must be placed the convincing human atmosphere which results in a really good impression of Army life. This element, however, is not sufficient to counterbalance the main propaganda defects of the film.

Thumbs up Texas. *Production:* March of Time (No. 5. Seventh Year). *Distribution:* R.K.O. Radio Pictures. 17 mins.

Subject. The story of modern Texas, its enormous size, variety of natural resources and industries, its spirit of tough American individualism, its enormous contribution to the Allied war effort.

Treatment. The film is scrappy and shapeless and consists of a number of beautifully photographed but unrelated sequences and scenes demonstrating the magnitude of everything which has to do with Texas. The short synopsis of Texan history with which the film opens is as interesting for British audiences as for American, but the subsequent part of the film pre-supposes some previous knowledge of the subject. For example the geography of Texas, on which many of the film's arguments depend, is never made completely clear by maps. *March of Time* departs from its usual commentary style by using for the greater part of the film a slow-speaking Texan with an extremely attractive voice. This experiment is a distinct success but it is more than balanced by another new and most alarming *March of Time* trend—a toadying attitude towards the local "big-shots" who crop up in the item. There is an attitude almost of adulation towards one gentleman whose sole purpose in life appears to be to obtain a commercial advantage for his own city over its immediate neighbour. He is shown employing the most fantastic methods of personal ballyhoo. Years ago *March of Time* used to turn the full blast of its famous cynicism upon people like this.

Propaganda value. Negligible for British audiences.

A Few Ounces a Day. Paul Rotha Productions. *Designed by:* The Isotype Institute. *Sound effects:* Ernst Meyer. *Commentary:* Henry Hallatt. M.O.I. 5 mins.

Subject. The conveyer belt across the Atlantic is bringing materials to our country. Great convoys arrive, but some ships are sunk and materials urgently needed in our factories are lost. Salvage on a thorough-going and nation-wide basis can go a very long way towards offsetting this particular activity of our enemy.

Treatment. The approach to the subject is by way of the statistics of the situation. The manner of presentation is unique. The statistics are brought to life by means of animated unit symbols called isotypes. These have hitherto only been used in graphic form, i.e. statically. At the commencement of the film the symbols are introduced to the audience, after which they proceed to assemble in various groupings and form interrelationship. The logic of the visual story is given further point by a very ingenious use of sound effects. The treatment is planned to appeal not only to the reason but to the feelings. This is largely achieved by the voice employed for the commentary, a voice which is unusually sincere, urgent and warm.

Propaganda value. Possibly the most effective short film the M.O.I. has commissioned. It has information and instruction on a vital issue, and is an effective call to us all to take action.

Battle of the Books. *Production:* Paul Rotha Productions. *Direction:* Jack Chambers. *Commentary:* Henry Ainley. M.O.I. 5 minutes.

Subject. The purpose of the film is to contrast the attitudes of Nazi Germany and democratic Britain towards books. In the Fascist countries the great works of history are publicly burned; in Britain an enormous amount is done to bring books, magazines and papers to the people. Public libraries, mobile libraries, books for the Services, cheap editions of classical and modern works—all help to serve an increasing desire of people everywhere to inform themselves.

Treatment. The film is efficiently made but is spoiled by a pompous and portentously spoken commentary from Henry Ainley.

Propaganda value. If stressing the obvious is good propaganda then *Battle of the Books* has some value. One would have cared for a little more analysis. There is no virtue in reading—or in writing—for its own sake. As a recent *Evening Standard* leader said:

> "How many bad novels, unreadable memoranda, lachrymose love letters, sickly biographies and piffling pamphlets have been written in recent years?"

and

> ". . . the great Niagara of useless, meaningless words which men have spilt or drooled or dribbled on to paper in the last twenty years alone."

Germany burnt her books—which was a waste. We do better. We send them to Beaverbrook who turns them into shells and bullets for the Soviet Union.

Dangers in the Dark. *Production:* Public Relationship Films. *Direction:* R. Massingham. M.O.I. 5 minutes.

Subject. A group of people—pedestrian, cyclist, motorist and lorry driver—all get mixed up in a road accident. Each tries to blame it on the other but each was equally responsible. Simple safety devices had been ignored. The pedestrian did not carry a torch; the cyclist was without his rear light; the motorist was not used to driving in the black-out; the lorry man was driving on the white line.

Treatment. The characters are merely puppets on which to hang the arguments. The accident is too obviously staged and the continuity lacking in sparkle. A much greater realism in character and incident should have been aimed at.

Propaganda value. Less than somewhat when compared with the terrific effect of *Drunk Driving* in the M.G.M. *Crime Doesn't Pay* series.

Venture Adventure. *Production:* Crown Film Unit. *Direction:* Charles Hassé. *Photography:* Edward Catford. *Sound:* A. Valentine. M.O.I. 5 minutes.

Subject. We start with some youths looking over the barbed wire at the edge of an airfield and getting into a fight over the identity of one of the planes they see coming down. The solution for this distressing occurrence is for them to join the A.T.C. We are shown boys joining, being given physical training and various forms of instruction and we end with one of our pugnacious young gentlemen being shown over a bomber whilst a new group of youths gazes wistfully over the barbed wire.

Treatment. The film is well made and up to the usual Crown standards. There is quite a nice lot

(*continued on p.* 209)

SHORT FILM BOOKINGS FOR NOVEMBER—DECEMBER

The following bookings for November and December are selected from a list covering its Members, supplied by The News and Specialised Theatres Association

	Week ending
Acrobatic Aces	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Dec. 20th
The News Theatre, Birmingham	20th
The News Theatre, Leeds	20th
Across the Water	
The News Cinema, Aberdeen	Nov. 29th
Alive, Alive-O	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Dec. 20th
All Comedy Show	
The News Theatre, Manchester	Nov. 29th
The News Theatre, Bristol	Dec. 6th
The News Theatre, Manchester	20th
All's Well	
The News Theatre, Leeds	Nov. 22nd
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	Dec. 13th
American Spoken Here	
The News Theatre, Leeds	Nov. 29th
Arrow Points	
The News Theatre, Leeds	Nov. 22nd
A Village in India	
Waterloo Station News Theatre, London	13th
Beautiful British Columbia	
The News Theatre, Bristol	Dec. 20th
Common Heritage—No. 1	
The News Theatre, Leeds	13th
Caballero College 4	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	6th
Calling on Columbia	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	Nov. 29th
Daghastan	
The News Theatre, Leeds	29th
Dances of the U.S.S.R.	
The News Theatre, Newcastle	Dec. 6th
Day in Soviet Russia	
The News Theatre, Nottingham	13th
Delhi	
The News Cinema, Aberdeen	Nov. 22nd
Dog in the Orchard	
The News Theatre, Leeds	Dec. 13th
Fagins Freshmen	
The News Theatre, Leeds	Nov. 29th
Feathers	
Victoria Station News Theatre, London	24th
Feminine Fitness	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Dec. 13th
Ferdinand, the Bull	
The Tatler Theatre, Liverpool	Nov. 3rd
Filming the Fleet	
The Eros News Theatre, Piccadilly, London	17th
The News Theatre, Bristol	Dec. 13th
Fishing Fever	
The News Theatre, Leeds	Nov. 29th
The Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	Dec. 13th
Fitness Wins the Game	
The News Cinema, Aberdeen	Nov. 29th
Fools Who Made History	
The News Theatre, Leeds	Dec. 20th
Fresh Fish	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Nov. 22nd
The News Theatre, Leeds	Dec. 13th
Furnaces of Industry	
Victoria Station News Theatre, London	Nov. 3rd
Going Places—No. 74	
The News Cinema, Aberdeen	29th
Going Places—No. 87	
The News Cinema, Aberdeen	Dec. 6th
Guest of Honour	
The Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	13th
Harvest of the North	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	6th
Historic Virginia	
The Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	6th
Hollywood	
The Tatler Theatre, Leeds	20th
Home on the Range	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Nov. 29th
Indian Durbar	
The News Cinema, Aberdeen	Dec. 13th
Invitation to a Dance	
The News Cinema, Aberdeen	6th
Islands of the West Indies	
The News Theatre, Bristol	Nov. 22nd
The Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	22nd
Jungle	
The News Cinema, Aberdeen	29th
Jungle Archer	
The News Theatre, Manchester	22nd
Land of Maple Leaf	
The Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	29th
Last of the Windjammers	
The News Theatre, Nottingham	29th
Leningrad	
The World's News Theatre, Praed Street, London	13th
Master of the Cue	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	Dec. 13th

	Week ending
More About Nostra Damus	
The News Theatre, Bristol	Nov. 22nd
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	29th
Moscow	
The News Theatre, Newcastle	Dec. 20th
Mother Goose Goes	
The Tatler Theatre, Leeds	20th
Once Upon a Summer Time	
The News Theatre, Birmingham	Nov. 29th
On Ice	
The Tatler Theatre, Liverpool	24th
Over the Border	
The News Theatre, Nottingham	22nd
Peoples of Canada	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Dec. 13th
Raising Soldiers	
The Tatler Theatre, Liverpool	Nov. 24th
Return of the House	
The News Theatre, Leeds	22nd
Savoy in the Alps	
The Eros News Theatre, Piccadilly, London	24th
The News Theatre, Nottingham	Dec. 6th
Screen Snapshots	
The News Theatre, Manchester	13th
Speaking of Animals	
The Tatler Newsreel Theatre, Newcastle	Nov. 29th
The Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	29th
Soviet Sport	
The News Cinema, Aberdeen	Dec. 13th
Stranger than Fiction—No. 86	
The News Cinema, Aberdeen	Nov. 22nd
Stranger than Fiction—No. 87	
The News Cinema, Aberdeen	Dec. 13th
Suva Pride of Fiji	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	Nov. 22nd
That Man May Live	
The News Theatre, Leeds	22nd
The Autograph Hound	
The Tatler Theatre, Leeds	Dec. 13th
The Bookworm Turns	
The News Theatre, Leeds	20th
The Constable	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	Nov. 29th
The Gun	
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	29th
The Tatler Theatre, Liverpool	Dec. 10th
The News Theatre, Leeds	20th
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	20th

	Week ending
The Serving Army	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	6th
The World in Action	
The News Theatre, Leeds	13th
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The News Theatre, Leeds	6th
The Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	6th
The News Theatre, Birmingham	13th
The News Theatre, Newcastle	20th
Washington Parade	
The News Theatre, Manchester	13th
Western Waterway	
The News Theatre, Manchester	Nov. 22nd
What's Your I.Q.—No. 2	
The News Theatre, Leeds	Dec. 6th
Whispers	
The News Theatre, Bristol	Nov. 29th
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	Dec. 6th
Wings of Youth	
Victoria Station News Theatre, London	Nov. 6th

FEATURE FILM REVIVALS

A Star is Born	
The Tatler Theatre, Leeds	Dec. 6th
Beau Geste	
The Classic, Southampton	Nov. 16th
Convoy	
The Classic, Baker Street, London	23rd
Contraband	
The Classic, Croydon	6th
Follow the Fleet	
The Classic, Southampton	2nd
Knight Without Armour	
The Tatler Theatre, Leeds	Dec. 20th
Lost Horizon	
The Classic, Croydon	Nov. 16th
North West Passage	
The Embassy Theatre, Notting Hill Gate, London	13th
Of Mice and Men	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	29th
Oil for the Lamps of China	
The Classic, Southampton	13th
Pride and Prejudice	
The Classic, Baker Street, London	20th
Shop Around the Corner	
The Classic, Tooting	16th
The Hurricane	
The Tatler Theatre, Leeds	29th
The Long Voyage Home	
The Tatler Theatre, Chester	Dec. 13th

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(*continued from p.* 207)

of sync stuff and the rest is nicely held together by the "We Don't Want to March like the Infantry" song which the A.T.C. have apparently appropriated for their own use. The film does, however, betray a certain scrappiness as the result of trying to crowd in too much incident.

Propaganda Value. As regards recruiting value, a film about the A.T.C. is a sitter if ever there was one and *Venture Adventure* is certainly a success from this point of view. The difficulty I should say would be all the other way round, in finding sufficient equipment and instructors rather than recruits. From the wider propaganda point of view, however, *Venture Adventure* marks no advance at all on the usual Crown and M.O.I. efforts. Lads between the ages of 14 and 20 will always crowd into anything that offers them some scope for action, excitement and rough comradeship, and from this point of view it doesn't matter much to them whether it is the Boy Scouts, the Young Pioneers, the local betting and race-course gang or the Hitler Jugend. If the A.T.C. has anything to offer that similar organisations in Germany have not got, this is what the film should have been about. If it has not, then there is really no point in making the film at all.

W.R.N.S. *Production:* Strand Film Co. *Producer:* Donald Taylor. *Direction:* Ivan Moffat. *Camera:* Jo Jago. M.O.I. 5 mins.

Subject. This film deals with the sort of jobs which may fall to the lot of members of the W.R.N.S. It is presumably intended to give information on the nature and value of the work which is being done by women in the Services and to stimulate recruiting.

Treatment. The film is beautifully photographed but singularly dreary, slow and pointless. Apart from a very handsome W.R.N.S. officer who strides magnificently from shot to shot at the head of her marching column, there is little of interest. A number of elegant young women, apparently from Mayfair drawing rooms, are shown engaged in the more refined duties of the W.R.N.S. and one of their number speaks a languid commentary; but we are not allowed a sight of anything so plebeian as working-class girls doing chambermaids' jobs in the officers' mess.

Propaganda Value. Girls joining the W.R.N.S. are likely to do so for less glamorous but sounder reasons than any given here.

The Lion of Judah. *Production:* Army Film Unit. Middle East Command.

Subject. *Lion of Judah* briefly recapitulates the past five years of a brave people. It tells of a man with a price on his head who was never further than 100 miles from Addis Ababa and the Fascist terror. It speaks of the long awaited coming of the Emperor and the assembly of the Patriot army which, without tanks or artillery, with only its courage and an odd assortment of rifles, drove out 30,000 Italians.

Treatment. *Lion of Judah* is sensibly made. The people might have been the fuzzi-wigs they appear, but the film makers speak of them and record them in terms of the mead of honey they drink and the Psalms of David they sing. However, the film is little more than a tit-bit and the reference to the administrative partnership between this country and the Emperor is noticeably inadequate.

Propaganda Value. It is understood that the film is not intended for propaganda in this country; if so, more is the pity, for it tells of courage and fortitude more effectively than do many official films: and the courage of men transcends the barrier of language and race.

Post 23. *Production:* Strand Film Company. *Direction:* Ralph Bond. *Camera:* Charles Marlborough.

Subject. *Post* 23 is a warden's post in the London suburbs and the theme of the film is that men and women who would otherwise have remained strangers to each other have been brought together by war-time A.R.P. duties. In air-raids they have gained a sense of what can be achieved by combined action, and in conversations in their post they begin to realise that the proper reconstruction of the post-war world also will depend on the co-operation of ordinary people like themselves.

Treatment. John Longden takes the part of the post-warden, is narrator and introduces to the camera the bus-conductor, the shy clerk, the architect, the stockbroker, and the girl telephonist, who work with him in Post 23. We hear their conversations in the "local," on the street and in the post between raids, and we see them in action during a raid.

Propaganda value. The theme is good and the film is well-shaped, but dialogue and action are spoilt by a somewhat theatrical style which substitutes an artificial slickness for the sincerity and conviction vital to the effect of this kind of picture.

Common Heritage. *Production:* World in Action Ltd. *Producer:* John Hanau. 20 mins.

Subject. A history of the Mediterranean area in terms of the exploitation of its peoples by the Great Powers, the control of the Suez Canal, the establishment of the Jewish National Home in Palestine and the present need for a British victory.

Treatment. The picture is composed of familiar library material, and commentary is spoken in alternate sections and styles by Leslie Howard and Kent Stevenson. Howard is lyrical and Stevenson is tough. To begin with Howard is vaguely sentimental about the sufferings caused to innocent peoples throughout history by the predatory activities of expanding nations (pretty thin ice this, with the historical rôle of the Suez Canal cropping up at an embarrassing moment). Meantime, Stevenson declaims commercial jargon in the old-fashioned expressionist manner. Then, when Howard seems to be winning and it looks like winding up as a pacifist film with the police nosing round the box-office when you go out, the two protagonists suddenly change sides and Howard finds a solution to all his troubles in the might of the British Navy.

Propaganda value. Zero to negative.

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REALISM FOR CITIZEN KANE

By GREGG TOLAND, A.S.C.

Reprinted from the *American Cinematographer*

DURING RECENT years a great deal has been said and written about the new technical and artistic possibilities offered by such developments as coated lenses, super-fast films and the use of lower-proportioned and partially ceiled sets. Some cinematographers have had, as I did in one or two productions filmed during the past year, opportunities to make a few cautious, tentative experiments with utilising these technical innovations to produce improved photo-dramatic results. Those of us who have, must have felt, as I did, that they were on the track of something really significant, and wished that instead of using them conservatively for a scene here or a sequence there, they could experiment free-handedly with them throughout an entire production.

In the course of my last assignment, the photography of Orson Welles' picture, *Citizen Kane*, the opportunity for such large-scale experiment came to me. In fact, it was forced upon me, for in order to bring the picture to the screen as both producer-director Welles and I saw it, we were forced to make radical departures from conventional practice. In doing so, I believe we have made some interesting contributions to cinematographic methods.

Enhanced Reality

Citizen Kane is by no means a conventional, run-of-the-mill movie. Its keynote is realism. As we worked together over the script and the final, pre-production planning, both Welles and I felt this, and felt that if it was possible, the picture should be brought to the screen in such a way that the audience would feel it was looking at reality, rather than merely at a movie.

Closely interrelated with this concept were two perplexing cine-technical problems. In the first place, the settings for this production were designed to play a definite rôle in the picture—one as vital as any player's characterisation. They were more than mere backgrounds: they helped to trace the rise and fall of the central character.

Secondly—but by no means of secondary importance—was Welles' concept of the visual flow of the picture. He instinctively grasped a point which many other far more experienced directors and producers never comprehend; that the scenes and sequences should flow together so smoothly that the audience would not be conscious of the mechanics of picture-making. And in spite of the fact that his previous experience had been in directing for the stage and for radio, he had a full realisation of the great power of the camera in conveying dramatic ideas without recourse to words.

Direct Cuts Avoided

Therefore from the moment the production began to take shape in script form, everything was planned with reference to what the camera could bring to the eyes of the audience. Direct cuts, we felt, were something that should be avoided wherever possible. Instead, we tried to plan action so that the camera could pan or dolly from one angle to another whenever this type of treatment was desirable. In other scenes, we pre-planned our angles and compositions so that action which ordinarily would be shown in direct cuts would be shown in a single, longer scene—often one in which important action might take place simultaneously in widely-separated points in extreme foreground and background.

These unconventional set-ups, it can readily be seen, impose insurmountable difficulties in the path of strictly conventional methods of camerawork. To put things with brutal frankness, they simply cannot be done by conventional means. But they were a basic part of *Citizen Kane* and they *had* to be done!

Designing the Sets

The first step was in designing sets which would in themselves strike the desired note of reality. In almost any real-life room, we are always to some degree conscious of the ceiling. In most movies, on the other hand, we see the ceiling only in extreme long-shots—and then it is usually painted in as a matte-shot. In the closer angles, the camera seldom shows the ceiling, or even anything suggesting it. On the contrary, conventional interior lighting-effects, since the light is projected from spot-lighting units perched high on the lamp-rails paralleling the sets, come from angles which would be definitely impossible in an actual, ceiled room.

Therefore the majority of our sets for *Citizen Kane* had actual ceilings. They were low ceilings—in many instances even lower than they would be in a real room of similar style. Furthermore many of our camera-angles were planned for unusually low camera set-ups, so that we could shoot upward and take advantage of the more realistic effects of those ceilings. Several sets were even built on parallels, so that we could take up any desired section of the flooring and place the lens actually at floor level.

Lighting

This, as may be imagined, immediately created a very interesting problem in lighting. Since the sets were ceilinged, not one of the 110 sets were paralleled for overhead lighting. With the exception of a few occasional shots for which

we could remove a small section of ceiling to permit using a "Junior" or similar spotlight overhead for really necessary backlighting, everything in the picture was to be lighted from the floor.

With deep sets, this necessitated the use of light which would have great penetrating power. This was found in the twin-arc broadsides developed for use in Technicolor. These lamps formed the backbone of our lighting, supplemented of course with "Juniors," "Seniors," and 170-Amp. arc spots as might be necessary.

In passing, it may be mentioned that this technique of using completely ceilinged sets so extensively gave us another advantage: it eliminated that perpetual bane of the cinematographer—microphone shadows! The ceilings were made of muslin, so the sound engineers found no difficulty at all in placing their mikes just above this acoustically porous roof. In this position, they were always completely out of camera-range, and as there was no overhead lighting, they couldn't cast any shadows. Yet the ceilings were so low that the mike was almost always in a very favourable position for sound pick-up. I must admit, however, that working this way for eighteen or nineteen weeks tends to spoil one for working under more conventional conditions, where one must always be on the lookout lest the mike or its shadow get into the picture!

Optical Problems

The next problem was to obtain the definition and depth necessary to Welles' conception of the picture. While the human eye is not literally a universal-focus optical instrument, its depth of field is so great, and its focus-changes so completely automatic that for all practical purposes it is a perfect universal-focus lens.

In a motion picture, on the other hand, especially in interior scenes filmed at the large apertures commonly employed, there are inevitable limitations. Even with the 24 mm. lenses used for extreme wide-angle effects, the depth of field—especially at the focal settings most frequently used in studio work (on the average picture, between 8 and 10 feet for the great majority of shots)—is very small. Of course, audiences have become accustomed to seeing things this way on the screen, with a single point of perfect focus, and everything falling off with greater or less rapidity in front of and behind this particular point. But it is a little note of conventionalised artificiality which bespeaks the mechanics and limitations of photography. And we wished to eliminate these suggestions wherever possible.

Now it is well known that the use of lenses of short focal length tends in itself to increase the depth of field. So, too, does stopping down the lens.

Since the introduction of today's high-speed emulsions, some photographers and some studios make it a practice to take advantage of the film's speed by stopping their lenses down to apertures as low as f: 3.5 or thereabouts when filming interiors. In some instances this is done only occasionally, when for some reason added depth may be desired for a scene or sequence; in others, it is a fixed practice.

To solve our problem, we decided to carry this idea a step farther. If using a high-speed film like Plus-X and stopping down to f: 3·5 gave a desirable increase in definition, wouldn't it—for our purpose, at least—be a still better idea to employ a super-speed emulsion like Super-XX, and to stop down even further.

Preliminary experiments proved that it was. However, merely stopping down to the extent which would compensate for the higher sensitivity of Super-XX was still not enough, though we were clearly on the right track.

The next step inevitably was to stop down to whatever point might give us the desired depth of field in any given scene, compensating for the decreased exposure-values by increasing the illumination level.

This, especially on deep, roofed-in sets where no overhead lighting could be used, naturally created another lighting problem. Fortunately, two other factors helped to make this less troublesome than might have been expected.

First, we were using, as I have been for some time, lenses treated with the Vard "Opticoat" non-glare coating. In view of the considerable discussion that has arisen since the introduction of these treating methods, I may mention that so far I have found this treatment not only beneficial, but durable. Depending upon the design of the lens to which it is applied, it gives an increase in speed ranging between half a stop and a stop, while at the same time giving a very marked increase in definition, due to the elimination of flare and internal reflections.

Secondly, due to the nature of our sets, and the lighting problems incident to our use of ceilinged sets, we were, even before we changed from Plus-X to Super-XX, making considerable use of arc broadsides. In addition to the greater penetrating power of arc light as compared to incandescent, this gave us a further advantage, for the arc is unexcelled in concentrating the greatest illuminating power into a comparatively small unit.

The use of these lamps made it possible to use considerably smaller lens apertures than would otherwise have been the case, while still keeping to satisfactorily low illumination-levels, and using surprisingly few lighting units. In many scenes, including even some in the big sets representing Xanadu, "Kane's" exaggeratedly palatial Florida estate, the entire lighting was accomplished using a total of only five or six units, including the arc broads and incandescent spotlights of all sizes.

It was therefore possible to work at apertures infinitely smaller than anything that has been used for conventional interior cinematography in many years. While in conventional practice, even with coated lenses, most normal interior scenes are filmed at maximum aperture or close to it—say within the range between f: 2.3 to f: 2.8, with an occasional drop to an aperture of f: 3.5 sufficiently out of the ordinary to cause comment—we photographed nearly all of our interior scenes at apertures not greater than f: 8—and often smaller. Some scenes were filmed at f: 11, and one even at f: 16!

How completely this solved our depth of field problem may easily be imagined. Even the standard 50 mm. and 47 mm. objectives conventionally used have tremendous depth of field when stopped down to such apertures. Wide-angle lenses such as the 35 mm., 28 mm. and 24 mm. objectives, when stopped down to f: 11 or f: 16 become to all intents and purposes universal-focus lenses.

Depth of Focus Called for

But we needed every bit of depth we could possibly obtain. Some of the larger sets extended the full length of two stages at the RKO-Pathé Studio, and necessitated holding an acceptably sharp focus over a depth of nearly 200 feet. In other shots, the composition might include two people talking in the immediate foreground —say two or three feet from the lens—and framing between them equally important action taking place in the background of the set, thirty or forty feet away. Yet both the people in the immediate foreground and the action in the distance had to be kept sharp!

In still other shots, Welles' technique of visual simplification might combine what would conventionally be made as two separate shots—a close-up and an insert—in a single, non-dollying shot. One such, for instance, was a big-head close-up of a player reading the inscription on a loving-cup. Ordinarily, such a scene would be shown by inter-cutting the close-up of the man reading the inscription with an insert of the inscription itself, thereafter cutting back again to the close-up. As we shot it, the whole thing was compressed into a single composition. The man's head filled one side of the frame; the loving-cup, the other. In this instance, the head was less than 16 *inches* from the camera, while the cup was necessarily at arm's length—a distance of several feet. Yet we were able to keep the man's face fully defined, while at the same time the loving-cup was in such sharp focus that the audience was able to read the inscription from it. Also, beyond this foreground were a group of men from 12 to 18 feet focal distance. These men were equally sharp.

Setting focus

This unorthodox technique, as might be expected, brought with it a completely new set of photographic and lighting problems. Solving them taught us a lot. For example, there is the matter of setting focus on scenes like these, where it is necessary to spread the depth of field over an incredibly great area. Any experienced cinematographer or still photographer will automatically reply, "That's easy—just split your focus between the nearest and farthest points you want to keep in focus!" Yes——that's the answer—but just *where* should you focus your lens in order to do this?

This is something only practical experience can answer consistently, for while the depth of field of all lenses falls off more sharply in front of the point of focus than behind it, this effect varies not only according to the focal length of the lens used, but according to the degree to which it is stopped down and the point upon which it is focused. Gaining this experience

one certainly learns surprising things about the behaviour of lenses. For example, I discovered that a 24 mm. lens, stopped down to f: 8 or less, becomes almost literally a universal-focus objective at a certain point. If it is set to focus on a point 4 feet 6 inches in front of the camera, everything from 18 inches to infinity will be in acceptably sharp focus. There are also some lenses which as they are stopped down, suddenly reveal totally unexpected optical characteristics at certain settings, and quite as inexplicably lose them as they are stopped down further. I have known of instances in which lenses were excellent until they were closed down to, say, f: 6.3, but became distinctly inferior at apertures below this point—only to recover their quality again as the diaphragm passed the f: 11 or f: 16 mark.

Lighting for this combination of ultra-fast film, coated lenses and radically reduced apertures offers its own new problems. One has to learn a completely new system of lighting-balance. The fast film tends to flattened contrasts: but the coated lenses and the reduced apertures both tend to increase contrast. As a result, one must light scenes made in this manner with much less contrast than would be his custom under more normal circumstances.

Again, the precise degree of change depends upon the stop used; but in general, the shadows must be "opened up" with a more general use of filler light, the highlights must be watched, when optical diffusion is used, diffusers such as Scheibes, which tend to soften contrasts, are generally preferable. Obviously, too, when you are dealing with film of the extreme sensitivity of Super-XX, you will find that even at reduced apertures, extremely delicate gradations of lighting-contrast pick up, registering far more strongly on the film than they do to even the trained eye. Yet, strangely enough, once a cinematographer has accustomed himself to this type of lighting, it becomes in many ways easier than more conventional lighting, for it is simpler, less artificial, and employs fewer light-sources.

Dissolves

A further innovation in this picture will be seen in the transitions, many of which are lap-dissolves in which the background dissolves from one scene to another a short but measurable interval before the players in the foreground dissolve. This is done quite simply, by having the lighting on set and people rigged through separate dimmers. Then all that is necessary is to commence the dissolve by dimming the background lights, effectually fading out on it, and then dimming the lights on the people, to produce the fade on them. The fade-in is made the same way, fading in the lighting on the set first, and then the lighting on the players.

In closing, I would like to pay high tribute to those who were associated in the making of *Citizen Kane*. Producer-director Orson Welles, of course, heads the list; he is not only a very brilliant young man, but also one of the most delightfully understanding and co-operative producers and directors with whom I have ever worked. Art director Perry Ferguson is another whose ability helped make *Citizen Kane* an unusual production. His camera-wise designing of the settings not only made it possible to obtain many of the effects Welles and I sought, but also made possible the truly remarkable achievement of building the production's 110 sets, large and small, for a total expenditure of about $60,000—yet gave us sets which look on the screen like a much larger expenditure. RKO special-effects expert Vernon Walker, A.S.C., and his staff handled their part of the production—a by no means inconsiderable assignment—with ability and fine understanding. Finally, the operative crew who have been with me for so many years—Operative Cinematographer Bert Shipham, and Assistant Cameraman Eddie Garvin—played their accustomed parts in helping me to put Orson Welles' initial production on the screen. Experimenting as we were with new ideas and new methods, none of them had an easy time. But thanks to the spirit of understanding and co-operation which prevailed, we emerged with what I think will prove a notable picture, and, I hope, the starting-point of some new ideas in both the technique and the art of cinematography.

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RELIGION AND THE FILM IN SCOTLAND

by a Scottish Ministerial Film Fan

SCOTLAND has certainly lagged behind England in making use of the film for religious purposes. Perhaps the canny Scot is more conservative in religious matters, or perhaps it is that he is more frank in facing difficulties and likes to see beyond these before embarking on a new enterprise. The educational world had similar hesitation and conservatism to overcome, and only within the last two years has introduced the cinema widely as a teaching method. And the difficulties that confronted the teacher were far fewer than those which confront the Church worker. Religious people are apt to be sensitive in their prejudices; and the subject itself is subtle and abstract and not easily to be translated into the language of the screen. Yet it is only in life that religion reveals itself, and life is capable of being pictorially presented.

At present there is a growing desire in Scotland to experiment with the film as a means of presenting and interpreting religion. Some three years ago an interdenominational association was formed called The Scottish Churches Film Guild, for the promotion of the use of films in connection with the Church. The Guild has practically no funds and has not received too much support; yet branches were formed in several parts of the country, and considerable work had been set going when the war and the calling up of many of the leaders brought things almost to a standstill. In Edinburgh, more than elsewhere, however, an effort is being made to keep things going. On one evening each month a display of religious films is given in some church hall; and once a month new films are seen and reviewed.

One difficulty which the war has accentuated is the lack of a sufficient number of 16 mm. projectors. A greater difficulty is that there are still very few really good religious films available. Some there are, but most so far produced are either technically crude or give a sentimental and inadequate treatment of their subject. It was in full consciousness of these difficulties that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland was persuaded last May to appoint a Committee "to investigate and report on the use of films for Church purposes." It is hoped that one result of this committee's report will be the setting up of a permanent organisation within the Church to foster the use of films. But even more necessary is the appointment of a committee to advise producers as to the kind of films which the Church requires. Such a committee should contain members of three kinds—experts in special subjects such as the Bible itself, Church history, the Church's social, evangelistic and foreign mission work, and religious literature; men with knowledge of the conditions under which the films will be shown, and men with some technical knowledge of film production. So far there seems to have been a tendency to put the cart before the horse. Films have been produced, submitted for review by Church panels of reviewers, and frequently condemned as unsuitable. Detailed direction beforehand as to particular kinds of films desired would almost certainly produce more satisfactory results. Such a committee, if established, would, of course, work in close co-operation with any similar body in England. One essential is that the films should have the widest possible circulation, and no merely Scottish scheme could hope to be an economic proposition.

These are some of the problems which Scottish churchmen interested in the film are trying to face. One thing is certain from the limited experience we have already had; people are waiting for this development; especially in the villages and smaller towns there is no lack of a congregation when it is known that a film is to be shown. And there seem to be great possibilities in the way of arousing a new interest in the facts and achievements of religion through this modern medium of representation.

FILM SOCIETY NEWS

BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE

The Institute has acquired many of the copies of foreign films hitherto distributed by Unity Films Ltd. These are now at the disposal of Film Societies should they wish to go in for a series of revivals of the better French films of the last few years.

Secondly, the National Film Library, which has recently published a new Catalogue, has embarked on a new and important line in making available single reel extracts from well-known feature films. These have been prepared for purposes of illustration and analysis and in each case the extract has been chosen so that it should have some completeness in itself and at the same time give a fair representation of the characteristic technical qualities of the whole film and, so far as is possible, of its theme. These are only available on 16 mm.

The new composite film on *The Use of Realist Material in the Cinema* is now at the recording stage and will be available for hire to Film Societies very shortly.

* * *

The third year of war finds the **Edinburgh Film Guild** continuing to serve the cause of international understanding by showing the best available Continental, British and American films. Despite war-time restriction of production and import, films are still available to maintain the standard and variety of previous seasons. Intelligent film-goers have long been grateful to the Edinburgh Film Guild for its private Sunday performances, and it is hoped they will bring them to the notice of the many new residents in the City.

The season will be divided into two parts. Five performances will be given in the first part before Christmas and five in the second part in the new year. During December it is hoped to arrange a special (additional) performance of films dealing with subjects connected with post-war planning. Notable among the films to be included in this programme is the American Institute of Planning production entitled *The City*. This documentary on town-planning analyses the problem of urban development by direct comparison and devastating satire, and finally illustrates the type of model city which is possible anywhere if we choose.

The first show had as feature Bénoit Levy's *Nous Les Jeunes*. Among other French films under consideration are *Drame de Shanghai* by G. W. Pabst (Kameradschaft)—a grim and exciting melodrama against a background of the Chinese struggle for freedom; and *Accord Final*, a story of the Geneva Conservatoire of Music. Russian films include *The Last Night*, an impression of the last night in Moscow before the Bolshevik dawn; *Peter the Great*, an ambitious historical film describing Peter's westernisation of Russia; and Eisenstein's *Teuton and Slav*. A Czechoslovakian programme will include *Pred Maturitou*, a film of student life in Prague and its environs. As with last season's programme, a special arrangement will be made for the translation of the dialogue.

For many years the Film Guild has devoted its programme to showing the life and art of other nations. In direct contrast the programme on November 2nd gave some idea how Scotland is shown on the screen to the rest of the world. The shorts included a group of new Scottish films produced by the British Council for wide distribution abroad, and the feature was Michael Powell's *Edge of the World* which has been shown with outstanding success in more countries than any other film dealing with Scotland.

The Cambridge University Film Society, which was started in February of this year, is now entering upon its second season. Three shows are to be held this term and next in the Arts Theatre, which is given by courtesy of the Trustees. The series of talks given last season on subjects connected with the film has been suspended for the moment, but may be resumed if there is sufficient demand from members. As before, the shows are supplemented by programme notes contributed, wherever possible, by the directors or others closely connected with the films being shown. The three shows scheduled between now and the beginning of December are: Nov. 2nd: Ptushko's *The New Gulliver*, with Georg Pal's *Big Broadcast*, Lotte Reiniger's *Papageno*, and Len Lye's *Rainbow Dance*. Nov. 16th: Jaques Feyder's *Les Gens du Voyage*, with Alexander Shaw's *Cover to Cover*. Nov. 23rd: Michael Powell's *The Edge of the World*, with Harry Watt's *North Sea*.

Manchester and District Film Institute Society has arranged in collaboration with the **Manchester and Salford Film Society** a further series of six film displays to be shown this year. The three full-length feature films to be screened at the Rivoli are *La Grande Illusion*, *Lenin in October* and *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. These will be supported by the usual specialised shorts including Massingham's *Tell Me if It Hurts* and *Island People*. In addition three sub-standard shows have been arranged, the first of which is entitled *Scrapbook of Film Comedy* 1896–1933. The second and third shows will be *Films of Freedom* and *Films of Science*. In each instance a special speaker will introduce each film.

In conjunction with the Ministry of Information the Film Institute Society are giving three free shows daily in the City Art Gallery for the next eleven weeks. The six weekly shows of the M.O.I. include Len Lye's *When the Pie was Opened*, *The White Eagle* and *Five Faces*. For the weeks between the M.O.I. film shows the Society has arranged a series of five weekly programmes to illustrate aspects of film art. These will be entitled *From Georges Méliès to Walt Disney*, *British Documentaries*, *How Story-telling by Film Developed*, *American Documentaries*, and *Early Chapters of Screen Comedy*.

The Belfast Film Society reports:—Although long delayed by our efforts to secure a cinema, which have finally proved fruitless, though for a time we were in high hopes, we are opening our season of repertory shows in the hall which we have used for the last two seasons. We are making one innovation by meeting on Saturday afternoons instead of holding evening shows, in the hope of overcoming difficulties created by the black-out, travel problems for country members, and the possibility of interruption by air-raid alerts. The first show was booked for Saturday, October 25th. The programme was Renoir's *La Marseillaise*, supported by *Free France*, the documentary about the de Gaulle movement's first year, a cartoon by Pinschewer, *De Lichtwacht*, and an early Disney. For the second show on November 22nd we have booked *Chapayev*, and hope to show a selection of shorts appropriate to a Russian feature film. The third show is to be on December 13th and for this we have booked *Zéro de Conduite*. It is tentatively proposed to accompany this by an early Marx Brothers film.

The Scottish Churches Film Guild reports:—A gratifying attendance was present at the first review of the new session held in Greyfriars Church Session Room, on Tuesday, October 14th. *The Common Round* was the first picture reviewed. Just an average picture, most useful for foreign mission work. A short reel was shown entitled *Symphonies in Stone—Canterbury*. This proved a most excellent picture. The photography was splendid and showed views mostly in and around the old Cathedral. Owing to its high standard this film was considered too short although there was no story attached to it. There was a feeling that more organ music, when the interior views were shown, would be a big improvement. The next meeting of the Guild takes place in the same premises on Tuesday, November 11th, when any interested are invited to attend.

Dundee and St. Andrews reports a substantial increase in membership which now stands at 743, an addition of almost 100 over last year's record figure; and there are still a considerable number of members to come in. This encouraging start has enabled full plans to be made for a season of ten performances. The subscription is to remain at 10*s*. On October 19th the programme consisted of *King of Spades* (in substitution for *The Viking Trail*), a Disney cartoon, and *Retour à L'Aube*. This programme was much appreciated by very large audiences at both the afternoon and evening performances, the latter being almost a full house. There is no doubt that this Society is now very firmly established and that its activities are of much value to a large and growing circle of members. It would be interesting to know if its claim to be the largest Society in the country can again be substantiated for this season.

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TWO FILMS OF THE MONTH

49th PARALLEL

Directed and Produced by: Michael Powell. *Camera:* Freddie Young. *Music:* Ralph Vaughan Williams. *Story:* E. Pressburger and Michael Powell. *Editor:* David Lean.

THIS is the first British feature film to be inspired and partly financed by an official Government body—the Ministry of Information, to be exact. Its production was whitened with the dust of trade conflict, and for a time it looked as though there would be no film, but only a nasty smell.

But 49*th Parallel* was completed, and has had one of the best Presses ever accorded to a British production. It is indeed one of the best made films ever produced in this country. It is, moreover, one of the few films of a purely episodic nature which has ever come off.

It tells of the adventures of six survivors from a Nazi submarine who wander through Canada trying to elude capture; of their gradual annihilation until only one remains to be captured by a piece of democratic initiative consisting of a neat jiggery poke with the Customs regulations on the Canada–U.S.A. border.

In the course of their diminishing Odyssey the Nazi sailors come up against a French Canadian trapper (Laurence Olivier), a German Hutterite settlement with a leader who aptly expresses the anti-Nazi viewpoint as seen by emancipated Germans (Anton Walbrook), a defeatist English intellectual (Leslie Howard), a tough Canadian soldier (Raymond Massey), and various assorted Eskimos and Red Indians. In each encounter the Nazis get an intellectual and/or physical poke in the snoot.

Vistas of the Canadian scene give the film a breadth and scope which sets off the sinister pilgrimage of the Nazis in such a way that the vastness of Canada becomes something of a symbol of the freedom which the Fascists aim to destroy. Nevertheless, the size of the subject tends also to make for slowness, and there is little doubt that the film would be more effective if it was cut by about twenty minutes.

Granted, however, that the film has strong entertainment value, there still remains the consideration of its value as propaganda. Views on this appear to differ. On the negative side it has been claimed (*a*) that we have been so conditioned by Hollywood to being on the side of the hunted rather than the hunters that there is bound to be some sympathy with the pursued Nazis; (*b*) that it's a pretty poor show if six Germans can be at large for so long in a hostile country; and (*c*) that an episode such as that in which an Englishman is presented as a dilettante is just playing into German hands, and that the toughness of the pay-off doesn't redress the negative effect.

On the whole these accusations will probably turn out to be more academic than real. The film throughout shows signs of the most careful scripting from the propaganda point of view, and each episode may be said to be conceived as a positive answer to questions arising from insinuations regarding the democratic standpoint.

As far as the pursuit goes, it must be remembered that the actions of the Nazis throughout the film include brutalities of various description, including cold-blooded murder. And if Eric Portman's brilliant performance as the Nazi commander gains a certain warmth at times, it is only in terms of that blind and fanatical loyalty which has so far been one of Hitler's major secrets of success. It is a loyalty which this film, step by step, reveals as a false faith. It just doesn't make the grade in the long run.

Leslie Howard's portrayal of the dilettante is bound to cause a certain amount of heartburn over here. But there is a good deal of justification for this particular sequence as far as opinion in the New World is concerned. Whether we like it or not, a picture of the Englishman as soft and decadent has grown up over the past ten years, especially in the U.S.A., and it is probably good propaganda to take the bull by the horns and put him on the screen. Here the trick is to give your audience a picture of someone whom they wrongly think is representative, and to turn the tables on them by revealing him as unexpectedly tough. Whatever opinion over here may be, it's a likely bet that Howard's knock-out of the Nazi will be a good propaganda stroke in the U.S.A.

The major criticism of 49*th Parallel* is largely that there was surely no need for it to be conceived in such misery or to take so long to make. The blame here must be apportioned between Trade and M.O.I. tycoons and not laid at the door of the technicians and actors who have in the end produced such an admirable job of film-making and of propaganda.

CITIZEN KANE

By: Orsen Welles, Gregg Toland and The Mercury Players

IT IS very strange the way people receive films. I always remember with wonder a correspondence in *The Times* on the superb artistry of *The River*. The film was, at its best, a good geography lesson. As a film it was not well constructed—it ignored the people who lived by the river—it was very badly photographed. The place name jingle was pleasant, but had been done quite a few times before. It might have made a pleasant one reel travelogue—it was certainly no three reel work of art.

Then there was the *Big Store*—a film that rates second or third in the Marx brothers' history. Groucho and Harpo's office sequence—the dance sequence with Virginia O'Brien—the chase after the photograph—the harp and mirror sequence—and a dozen short sequences such as the girl ordering material and Harpo getting it for her. All this, first class comedy, and the general opinion—at least amongst critics—was that it is a good thing that it is the Marx Bros.' last film.

Then there was a film called *Way for a Sailor*. John Gilbert's only serious sound film. It was the story of the crew of an American tramp steamer. They had been saving up for months to buy the bosun (Wallace Beery—then unknown) an accordion. John Gilbert was a fly boy and knew where he could get a stolen one cheap. They all waited for him outside the pawnshop while he popped in, bought himself a new suit and went out the back way and found a girl. The crew look for him all over the town. He, just preparing to eat a big supper in the girl's flat, goes out to buy a bottle of wine—the crew see him and it is all over—back to the pawnshop—and the clothes are exchanged for the accordion and they are all off to sea again, drinking in this port, fighting in that—always with their accordion. It was a simple film about simple pleasures of ordinary people—the only film of the sea that has touched it was *Merchant Seamen* (*Long Voyage Home* didn't even know what it was all about). But *Way for a Sailor* ran for only a few days at the Empire and disappeared. Why some bad films go so well and why some good films go so badly, I don't know. I do believe that M.G.M. had lost faith in their greatest money-maker, and just didn't bother to push the film. I can believe that they are no longer interested in the Marx Bros.—"this is their last film—what does it matter." They certainly didn't bother to put it on at their Empire.

Which brings us to *Citizen Kane*. It has had more ballyhoo than any film, I should think, since *Ben Hur*, and the right kind. Play up the art and genius angle boys—the new Leonardo da Vinci. So two good films, *Way for a Sailor* and *Big Store* were tucked away. One bad film *The River* was pushed out and made far more important than it was. And the *Citizen Kane* one has been successfully sold to all the "more intelligent filmgoers" as a work of art. As W. C. Fields said "One last word daughter—never give a sucker an even break!"

Citizen Kane is a very good straightforward film. Cut off the opening as far as the end of the newsreel and a cinema audience wouldn't know it from any other American film, providing, of course, that a slick publicity man hadn't told them what to think first.

The one thing you will have to admire is dear little Orson Annie, aged 25. He went to Hollywood and took them on his own terms, even getting a clause which I doubt has been used in a contract since *Greed*. "No one from R.K.O. unless invited by Mr. Welles shall see the film until what is termed the 'show-copy stage'." Ha! Ha! and they called him "little Orson Annie" But between pulling a Hollywood Mogul's nose and making a good film, there are several giant's causeways, and Orson Welles' boots are big, but they are not the seven league variety.

I think there are two main kinds of film makers—the instinctive, with people like Chaplin, John Ford, Renoir and Pabst, and Disney to a certain extent. Then there are the intellectual people like Ben Hecht, Lorentz, Eisenstein and Orson Welles. The Intellectuals know how

everything works—and this is not particularly against them—they have gone into life and film making from an outside, down the microscope view. People are puppets to put over theories with. The result is that *Citizen Kane*, like most films made by the intellectuals, is a cold and lifeless document of Kane and his satellites. Here are twelve carefully made slides. All the little bugs have been carefully dyed so that they are easily distinguished. This is a good bug—this is a bad one. This one helps mankind—this one is against. It is all cut and dried and proved by the most modern scientific formulae.

Apart from a few unnecessary shots at the beginning, it is a beautifully constructed film—the story dovetails together perfectly, but again it is scientific dovetailing—coldly and unemotionally slotted with a reporter. *Stagecoach* had a piece of music doing the same job—and as it repeated with its load of murderers, thieves, drunkards and whores bumping along, it was strongly emotional. Romantic maybe—but what about it.

One odd aspect of the film is that Orson Welles and Citizen Kane keep getting mixed up. During the party for the new staff, when the supposedly drinking, woman-chasing Kane plunges in amongst the chorus and dances, you suddenly get a nervous woman-shy Welles. He pecks at one girl, sheers away from touching another and is so incredibly out of place that it is almost pathetic. Welles was taken from home at an early age and brought up on culture by intellect. The same thing happened to Kane, and Welles is obviously very sympathetic—he regrets his background, and the whole story of "Rosebud" is most likely Welles' and not Kane's—Welles seeking his way back to the warm maternal bosom. If he ever gets there we might see some fur flying in the film business. He has a lot of the skills such as being able to construct and handle a film as a complete thing; of seeing the story, characters and sequences as a whole—giving each the right emphasis—which I should say is the most important technical asset a film director can have. He also seems to have the required nerve and courage that is necessary for a director to get his money and his free hand. He seems to have faith in technicians, and an understanding that films are made by units and not individuals. He seems to have the right idea of actors—that they should register a character and not themselves. He seems to have a lively enough mind to break away from traditions. But he has not the touch to bring the stuff alive. It is like the Creation, the seas, the dry land, the sun and the moon—trees, animals and birds—they all are lying there made, but old Adam is still a lump of clay. If Orson Welles can breathe into his mouth, and if his breath is of the life-giving kind, he'll most likely be as good a director as John Ford—one day.

SCIENTIFIC FILM SOCIETIES

GLASGOW SCIENTIFIC FILM SOCIETY

The idea of first establishing a Society to show scientific films was first mooted amongst members of the Association of Scientific Workers. It was soon evident, however, that there were a number of other interested people who would be glad to associate themselves with this movement. Accordingly an independent committee was set up composed of members of the A.S.W. and others, to initiate a scientific film society in Glasgow. The object of this society was then clearly defined, the purpose being to show films of a general scientific and technical nature, which would be of interest to non-scientific people as well as those professionally engaged in the sciences.

The Glasgow Scientific Film Society began its activities under very difficult circumstances. In the first place no scientific film society had previously existed in Glasgow, so that we did not know just how many members we would be able to enrol, or how much enthusiasm would be evinced to enable us to carry on as an effective Society. We were, therefore, extremely pleased to find that on our opening night more than fifty people came to the Technical College to enrol, whilst many more members notified the secretary by post of their intention to join the society. The Society thus was an immediate success so that shortly after its inception the membership list had to be closed in view of the limited accommodation available. In spite of the blitz and the blackout every meeting was very well attended. Most members were interested in our questionnaires, which were handed out and returned at each meeting, and these supplied us with some very helpful and lively suggestions and criticisms. Programmes were selected without undue difficulty, the selection being based on the preferences stated by members in the questionnaire returns. Harmonious working has been attained with the various film renters, particularly the Scottish Central Film Library.

During the winter session, the Society held six ordinary meetings and four extra meetings. All of these were film programme meetings, one of these being an Amateur Film Night. Arising out of the success of this Society one of our members has organised a very successful scientific film society in Ayrshire.

Judging from the success of its first year there is little doubt that the Society has filled a niche in the cultural life of Glasgow, and unless unforeseen circumstances arise it can look forward to a long and useful life. Whether the Society should confine itself to a comparatively small audience or decide to appeal to a much wider public will depend upon whether the membership regards the function of the Society as one of being to popularise scientific knowledge, so that science will thus become to be recognised as an integral part of the cultural life of the community. If it takes this latter view then sooner or later steps will have to be taken to make this expansion in our activities possible.

NEW RUSSIAN FILMS

By *Timespan*

UNDER THE auspices of the Society for Cultural Relations with the U.S.S.R. five short films on Soviet Art, a film poster entitled *Raid on Moscow* and a longer film entitled *Russian Salad* were recently shown to a large audience at the Stoll Picture Theatre, London. Four of the five short films show dances, songs and music of the Soviet peoples. They contain material which is quite new, and which has a magnificently exhilarating, artistic and cultural vitality.

For years now we in Britain have accepted an unbelievably spurious activity on stage, screen and concert platform. Mediocrity has almost become our native element. If you are concerned in creative activity in any way or if you are the man who has long paid a humble bob and felt that something was amiss, make a point of seeing these films. All the items are outstanding. Here are some examples: the Uzbek dance; "Ufari-Sakham"; the folk song "Yar-Khmel"; Shostakovich playing the finale of his concerto for piano and orchestra; "The Platform Love Song" sung by the winners of the All-Union Railwaymen's talent competition (an amazing comedy turn); "Posboni Mekunem" (We guard the frontiers) a contemporary Tadjik folk song; the Snake dance from the ballet "Du Gul". The fifth of the short films is on Soviet painting and sculpture. Activities in this direction are not of the same high order as in music and dance. Neither is this film the same magnificent entertainment as the other four. The film poster *Raid on Moscow* cocks a snoot at the waf-waf bird, and is a well-conceived five minutes of cartoon work. These five films are being handled by the Soviet War News Film Agency, Wembley Studios, Empire Way, Wembley Park, Middlesex.

The longer film on Soviet art, *Russian Salad* (originally entitled "Kino-Concert") runs for about 35 minutes. It is being generally released to the public by the Anglo-American Film Corporation. This film is rather less a document and rather more a *pot-pourri* of items of broad popular appeal. The items included are: Tchaikovsky's "Waltz of the Flowers" performed by the Leningrad State Orchestra; "La Cygne" danced by the ballerina Galina Ulanova; "The Red Arrow Express" by the Jazz band of the Railwaymen's Trade Union (a grand comedy number); scenes, songs and dances from a splendid version of "Rigoletto"; scenes from the ballet "Taras Bulba" performed by the Leningrad Academical theatre.

If there is room for truth and enduring value behind the activity we call propaganda, and I for one believe there is, then these films are true propaganda.

NEWS FILMS

By CORRY W. FENNELL

There is at present a good deal of discussion and criticism of the activities of the newsreels in wartime. In this article a prominent figure in the field of newsreel and specialised theatres discusses the newsreels in relation to their development over the past twenty years

WE MIGHT correctly view the first Sound News pictures as cameo records of passing events—flashing scenes set in painful order with a background of jumbled sound. With the resources available the results were creditable and the foundation was surely laid for service to come.

These early pictures were of passing interest and there was little money in them either for the producer or the theatre—the Derby, Boat Race and Cup Final were the events that brought people into the theatres. Then came the days of improved technique, of simple news-story-cutting set with "jingle bells" music and an easy commentary. The newsreel idea looked more promising but it was not yet important. There was, as yet, no story power in these reels, but the stop-press news idea was developed to such an extent over this period that at great cost records were created in speed of production and distribution which have never since been equalled.

By the middle of the thirties the five newsreels in this country had developed individuality—four almost invariably retained their own commentator whilst the fifth used various commentators who were expert at putting across the particular type of story for which they were chosen. This was a good idea, I think, and one that was prematurely abandoned.

At least one newsreel was being noticed for the powerful news-stories that it was putting across with fearless commentaries and strong pictures, whilst various newsreels were being noticed for their inspiring build-up of stories revolving around state occasions. At this time Government circles began to take some small interest in the possibilities of screen news, and at this time, almost as if one thing was connected with the other, there were whispers of "unofficial censorship." This was taken to battle in Parliament and in the Press. The censorship monster raised its head several times before it was finally slain, as slain it had to be in a democratic country, and, to all outward appearances the newsreels pursued their way unhindered.

It is of especial interest to note that at this time pictures were coming through showing the armed might of Germany. Whilst it was evident from these pictures that Germany was building a great war machine for aggression it was also evident that Germany, with usual Nazi thoroughness, considered it worth while to go into news film production itself and thereby was adding a further arm to its striking power. In this country at that particular time there was little help received by the newsreel companies from official circles for the making of pictures, permission and permits often being grudgingly granted as a favour and with many restrictions attached thereto. Newsreel camera men on occasion had to retire from the commissions they had in hand due to being allocated unworthy facilities for their work.

Up to this time the five news reel companies had been working in competition and it frequently happened that a cup final, boxing championship or cricket match would be exclusive to one particular news reel so that only the subscribers to this particular "reel" would have the pictures. In the great fight for exclusive news reel scoops many hard knocks were given and taken. Rights sold to one company were pirated by another. Pirate cameramen were hustled and their apparatus manhandled when they were caught.

It was then that the five newsreel companies decided to act together in certain matters; and the Newsreel Association was formed which resulted in the pooling of "shots" of state functions and national sporting events. This oiled the wheels for the nation-wide production of good news stories, but it was felt by many that if this collaboration led to the loss of the independence and healthy rivalry then existing between the five newsreel companies then we should come to a condition as fearful in its implications as that of a single control for all newspapers—either state or proprietary.

News theatres, having already made an appearance, increased in their numbers at this time, and whilst initially they were encouraged by some of the newsreel companies, later they were looked upon by most of them as of no account because their number was not great. This was a mistake. Today over forty news and specialised theatres which spread throughout the major cities of this country carry with them the power of an influential and socially minded public. It is certain that news and specialised theatres, because of the nature of their business and influence, will eventually take an increasingly important part in a social system with a specialised public hungry for news stories, and, therefore, they will be of account in the ultimate development of news story form.

Then came the wars—the Chinese War, the Abyssinian War and the Spanish War. Most of the newsreel companies sent out cameramen. It could not be said in any sense that the wars were covered, but magnificent incidents were sent back home. The Government should be for ever grateful to the newsreel companies for the film news stories that were brought back home, as being the only first-hand technical records of the machinery and war methods of those who were known at the time to be planning our destruction.

During the period between Spain, Munich and this Great War there was no change in newsreel technique, but there was maturity coming to them which gave great polish to their respective policies of news or news stories. When this war came cameramen were mobilised and sent out with the forces to bring back pictures. The number of cameramen available were pitifully small compared with the vast fronts to be covered by the various Services, and the co-operation and facilities granted to the cameramen by the authorities seemed to be so poor that there were few action pictures forthcoming. Action pictures *were* forthcoming from Germany and they were built up into twisted news stories to be used as propaganda in the neutral countries.

The trouble right up to this time was that the Government were not prepared to recognise in general the importance of newsreels or, for that matter, the importance of the cinema in the war effort, It is only recently that they have begun to think about giving practical effect to a general policy of assisting the newsreels in interpreting the war from the democratic point of view to the people at home, in the Dominions, and in neutral countries. If the newsreel and documentary people do not go on fighting for facilities we shall never succeed in presenting a case to our own people, to America or to the remaining neutrals.

As a result of close contact with a public who seek news films I believe that the democracies have such a good story that it is a very bad policy to include Ministry-manufactured or producer-inspired propaganda items in the newsreels. The public should rarely be talked at from the screen by officials unless the subject of communication is of such urgency and importance that every conceivable means of contact with the public simply must be taken. The British public do not like being lectured.

Before the war there was considerable duplication in the five newsreels in picture content, and since the war the position has grown worse due to the pooling of most of the war pictures taken under official permits. Some of this duplication is entirely unavoidable owing to shortage of material, but it can be minimised if the production collaboration between the newsreel companies is cut down to a minimum so that originality of story and freedom of treatment that would not otherwise be forthcoming would be achieved. Simple human interest news stories about people count more with the public and the services than reviews, mock war and many of the army training pictures that we are now getting.

Magnificent Russian war-pictures are coming through today and they have been given a splendid news story build-up by most of the newsreel companies. These films have probably given the British people a greater idea than the written word, of the enormous effort which is being put forward by Russia in defence of her country.

The use of the newsreels of the German pictures of the Russian war was in certain cases

masterly, but in other cases, in my own opinion, the commentator was unable to cope with his task and in this produced a result that we would all have been better without.

And now it seems that the Government, inspired by Mr. Brendan Bracken, are to take first-hand interest in the production of newsreels. One hundred cameramen are to be trained and given service rank with a view to covering operations on all fronts. This idea may give us wealth of material and, providing the newsreels have speedy access to all usable material, and providing that production is profitably co-ordinated and imaginatively supervised, then we may soon see a transformation in British news-film technique in matters relative to the war.

LET THE BRITISH WORKERS TALK

by Robert Waithman, *News Chronicle* New York correspondent. Reprinted by courtesy of the *News Chronicle*. Abridged.

IT IS MY conviction there is an urgent job to be done here in the United States by the British. It cannot be done by Lord Halifax or by any of our authorities from Whitehall, able as some of them are; it cannot be done by Mr. Attlee or by the delegation of either manufacturers or trade union leaders.

The job I mean is not one big people or even middling big people can do. The only people who can do it are the little people. I can hear them one by one, the voices of people I used to meet before the war when I was wandering about the North Midlands and around London in quest of news. I can hear the slow Glasgow voice of the boiler-maker from John Brown's yard I once spent a night with in a pub at Clydebank; and the wiry little miner from Jarrow who called me "Morra" and once took me on a Saturday jaunt to South Shields; Mrs. Schofield, of Darwen, who had spent her life working at a loom. No other voices could explain to American working people, now troubled and torn over questions of the closed shop and the right of labour to strike, why they, the British working people, are not any longer worrying over these questions.

Mrs. Schofield, when I knew her, believed in trade unionism as simply and in a way as devoutly as she believed in God, because she knew what it had been like before the union became an effective force in the Lancashire cotton mills. The miner who lived in Jarrow and followed Ellen Wilkinson in the unemployed march to London in 1936 talked that Saturday afternoon in South Shields about the closed shop. He thought of it as the Millenium. But he and Mrs. Schofield and all the rest have accepted dilution of industry with unskilled labour, and have agreed to work long hours without the right to strike. We know why they did it.

In America there has been so much talk for so many years about propaganda—which is interpreted to mean purposeful lying—that it has become an instinct to deny to any speaker or writer from abroad and to many at home the benefit of any doubt there may be. I am proposing that the British authorities should give British working people the chance to relate their own experience to the working people of America. Somebody inevitably is going to call this propaganda: but it isn't. The voices I can hear are not capable of purposeful lying. This is the real thing, about which I have tried to write before.

Since this war began the real thing alone has shown itself here in the United States to be capable of transcending the neatly docketed rules of human behaviour. A thousand speeches are made and there is only discussion—but then suddenly grimy figures are seen crawling from débris in the East End of London and shaking their fists at the dark sky, and then there's no discussion.

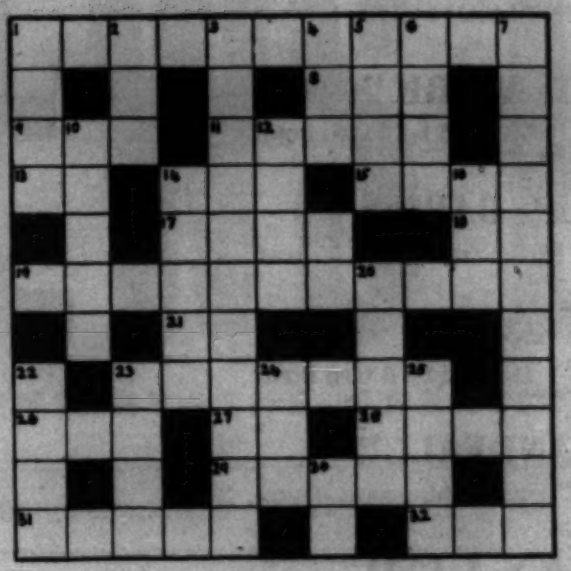
We should give British working people an opportunity to talk and write. We could make documentary films about them, as straightforward and genuine as *Target for Tonight*. This film was an instant success here precisely because it is the real thing. The working people in Britain who have found an answer to the problems which are now threatening to slow down American production are also the real thing.

5-MINUTE FILMS
FOR SEPTEMBER—OCTOBER

Title	*Theme*	*Director*	*Production Unit*	*Released*
The Royal Australian Navy (1)	Guarding Australia's Shores	Ralph Smart	Commonwealth Cinema, Melbourne	1941 September 1
The Pilot is Safe	Rescuing pilots who bale out over the sea	Jack Lee	Crown	September 8
New Zealand has Wings (2)	New Zealand raises an air force	—	N.Z. National Film Unit	September 15
Corvettes	Atlantic convoy	Ivan Scott	Spectator	September 22
H.M. Minelayer	Laying mines off the French Coast	Henry Cass	Verity	September 29
Dig for Victory (3)	A vegetable garden for everyone	—	Spectator	October 6
The Battle of the Books	Freedom of thought	J. Chambers	Paul Rotha Prods.	October 13
A Few Ounces a Day	Salvage	Donald Alexander	Paul Rotha Prods.	October 20
Dangers in the Dark	Road manners	R. Massingham	Public Relationship Films	October 27

(1) Re-edited by Sylvia Cummins from *It's the Navy*.
(2) Re-edited by Sylvia Cummins.
(3) Partly re-edited from *How to Dig*, *Sowing and Planting* and *Cultivation*.

Moppets' Pix Puzz.



CLUES

ACROSS

1. Author of continuity captions for 3 down (Rev.)
8. Academic indistinction
9. Finished when it's in it
11. Macmurray's, Oakie's, Nolan's Range
13 and 27. Italian spouter
14. Serpentine Tippet
15 and 22 down. Nearly Disney's dreamworld
17. Jumble Sale
18. Hopalong author's Christian name initials
19. After 7 down
21. With 26 across a kind of landing
23. Across and down—20th Fox standby
26. Latest blonde
27. See 13
28. Conway's villa
29. On beer makes you feel queer
31. Victorian authoress
32. Wyler's had snuffed it

CLUES

DOWN

1. This girl was queried
2. Lubitsch's I killed
3. Famous four-in-hand
4. Finishing touch to sound rushes
5. Backward part of magazine
6. The longer the better, say the girls, but often artificial
7. Late 23 across and down
10. Thurber's owl's residence
12. Comic copper's beat
14. In the park in King of Jazz
16. Troublesome in Mississippi
20. Sailor's sweetie
22. See 15 across
23. See 23 across
24 and 28. Shunned by the Free English
24. Near neutral

★ ***First correct solution opened on December 1st wins a bottle of whisky***

REALIST FILM UNIT LTD.

47 OXFORD STREET, W.1

TEL. GERRARD 1958/9

NINE PRODUCTIONS *completed* *by* STRAND FILMS *during October*

"W. R. N. S."

A Ministry of Information 'five minute' film

Produced by DONALD TAYLOR Directed by IVAN MOFFAT

"EATING AT WORK"

Produced by EDGAR ANSTEY Directed by RALPH BOND

"BRINGING UP BABIES"

Produced by MARION GRIERSON Directed by IVAN MOFFAT

"POST 23"

Produced by DONALD TAYLOR Directed by RALPH BOND

"A GOOD LANDFALL"

Produced by DONALD TAYLOR Directed by MICHAEL GORDON

"THE PEOPLE'S LAND"

(*In Technicolour*)

Produced by DONALD TAYLOR Directed by RALPH KEENE

"CITIZENS ARMY"

Produced by DONALD TAYLOR Directed by IVAN MOFFAT

"RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE"

(*Two versions – French and Arabic*)

Produced by DONALD TAYLOR Directed by RALPH KEENE

"THIS IS COLOUR"

(*In Technicolour*)

Produced by BASIL WRIGHT Location Director, JACK ELLITT

THE STRAND FILM COMPANY LTD.

DONALD TAYLOR, Managing Director

5a UPPER ST. MARTIN'S LANE, W.C.2

MERTON PARK STUDIOS, 269 KINGSTON RD., S.W.19

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